

ARTICLE 1
ON PAGE 3-AWASHINGTON TIMES
16 October 1986

INSIDE THE BELTWAY

Mow-ing right along

Ben Garcia of Old Orchard Beach, Maine, is described by friends as a former CIA agent who now heads an organization called WOOF (World Order of Friends). Mr. Garcia left Old Orchard last month riding a power lawnmower on a "Peace through Friendship" trip to either Miami or Los Angeles.

"I don't think he's decided," said Kim Loranger, a friend who hears from Mr. Garcia once a week. She said she heard from him yesterday and he had arrived inside the Beltway. "He said he went to the Russian Embassy and met with some diplomats," she said.

She said the customized vehicle he is riding was built by power lawnmower racing enthusiasts in Slippery Rock, Pa.

And never let it be said that this column did not go the extra mile on behalf of readers who, on reading that last sentence, shake their heads in disbelief. According to Sheridan Hines, president of the burrough council of Slippery Rock, "We have a very active group of power lawnmower and garden tractor racers here. They modify them and soup them up and race them for prize money."

OK, so back to Mr. Garcia. The folks he stayed with in the Maryland suburbs last saw him yesterday morning, headed for the Soviet Embassy. The Soviet press attache was unavailable for comment. At last report, Mr. Garcia was headed South down Route 1. We can only assume he's decided that the grass is greener in Miami than in L.A.

—John Elvin